

the assault. He was blinded in one eye, but he continued holding the plasma, and he refused treatment for himself until the wounded officer was evacuated.

For their extraordinary service, John Finn and Robert Bush received the Congressional Medal of Honor. Today we recognize them and the other Medal of Honor winners who are here with us today. We ask them all to stand. [Applause] And now I would like to ask all the veterans of the Pacific war to stand and those who cannot stand, to raise their arms and be recognized so that we can express our appreciation to each of them. Please, gentlemen. [Applause]

To all of you and to your comrades who are watching at home on television and to the families of the more than 50,000 Americans who never came home from the Pacific, our Nation is forever grateful. We will never forget your fight for our freedom.

After the war and all you had endured, it was only natural that the World War II generation would turn your energies from the frontlines to the homefront. But thankfully, you did not turn your back on the world. Instead you helped to rebuild the devastated nations of Europe and Japan. And because you chose reconciliation over revenge, those who once were our enemies now are thriving democracies and strong friends.

Let me welcome all of those from other nations who have come here. And let me say especially how much the American people appreciate the recent powerful words of the Japanese Prime Minister, Mr. Murayama, when he expressed his nation's regret for its past aggression and its gratitude for the hand of reconciliation that this, the World War II generation, extended 50 years ago.

We owe the World War II generation our thanks because they also understood our Nation had a special role to play in continuing to preserve the peace and extending the reach of freedom. They forged the international institutions, the economic institutions, the United Nations, and NATO, that brought 50 years of security and prosperity to our Nation, to Europe, and to Japan. They kept our Armed Forces strong so that tyranny could never again run rampant, and they persevered in the cold war until the forces of freedom prevailed yet again.

Today, we continue to stand watch for freedom and to advance the cause of democracy across the Pacific, across the Atlantic, all around the globe. To meet that obligation and to preserve our own liberty, we must reaffirm our pledge to these fine men and women behind me and their counterparts throughout the world who bear today the responsibility that World War II's veterans shouldered so magnificently 50 years ago. So I say to you, you will always be the best trained, the best equipped, the best prepared fighting force in the world.

You represent the best of our country, our best hope for the future. And we know that for you and your children and your grandchildren, we must remain the strongest nation on Earth so that we can defeat the forces of darkness in our time and in the future, just as the veterans here defeated the force of tyranny 50 years ago.

Fifty years ago today, aboard a ship in Tokyo Bay, a Navy radioman penned this letter to his young son in Abilene, Texas. "When you grow a little older," he wrote, "you may think war to be a great adventure. Take it from me, it's the most horrible thing ever done by man."

Veterans of the Pacific, because you were willing to undergo the most horrible thing ever done by man, freedom is the order of the day in most of the world 50 years later.

Now it is for us to be true to your legacy of courage and devotion, to follow your lead in finding strength in America's diversity and unity in America's purpose. You worked together, and you never gave up. We must now preserve the liberty you won for us.

We say to you from the bottom of our heart, God bless you, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:30 a.m. at the reviewing stand. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. Fred Weyand, USA (Ret.), former Army Chief of Staff; and entertainer Bob Hope and his wife, Dolores. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Remarks to the Troops at Wheeler Army Airfield in Honolulu

September 1, 1995

Audience member. Go Razorbacks!

The President. That's good. Promote that man. [Laughter]

Let me say, first of all, I thank you for the magnificent job that you did today. It was thrilling to all the veterans who are here and all their family members, and thrilling to the people in the United States who saw it on television. I thank you for your service and your devotion to your country. I hope you realize just how historic these few days are. I hope every one of you has the opportunity to get out and meet some of these World War II veterans who were here 50 years before you and whose legacy you have carried on so greatly.

I just want you to know that I, as the President and Commander in Chief and as an American citizen, am profoundly grateful to you for your service to this country, proud of what you represent, and I'm determined to do everything I can to support you, to see that we can, together, do our job to preserve our freedom and expand democracy.

You are terrific. Thank you. God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:43 a.m. in the lanai of the consolidated mess. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Bosnia

September 1, 1995

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

I last reported to the Congress on May 24, 1995, concerning U.S. support for the United Nations and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) efforts in the former Yugoslavia. I am today reporting on the use of U.S. combat and support aircraft commencing on August 29, 1995 (EDT), in a series of NATO air strikes against Bosnian Serb Army (BSA) forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina that were threatening the U.N.-declared safe areas of Sarajevo, Tuzla, and Gorazde. The NATO air strikes were launched following an August 28, 1995, BSA mortar attack on Sarajevo that killed 37 people and injured over 80. This tragic and inexcusable act was the latest in a series of BSA attacks on unarmed civilians in the safe areas.

By way of background, and as I am sure you are aware, the situation in eastern Bosnia-Herzegovina, and in particular the safe areas in the so-called "eastern enclaves," changed dramatically in the month of July. On July 11, 1995, the safe area of Srebrenica fell to the BSA following repeated BSA attacks. As a result of the fall of Srebrenica, over 40,000 persons were forced from their homes. Similarly, on July 26, 1995, the safe area of Zepa fell to attacking BSA forces with over 8,000 persons displaced. As a result of these actions by the BSA, intensive discussions took place between U.N. and NATO authorities to address what could be done to enhance protection of the remaining safe areas of Sarajevo, Tuzla, Bihac, and Gorazde.

Under United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 824 of May 6, 1993, certain portions of Bosnia-Herzegovina, including the city of Sarajevo, were established as safe areas that should be "free from armed attacks and from any other hostile act." Additionally, under UNSCR 836 of June 4, 1993, member states and regional organizations are authorized, in close coordination with the United Nations, to take all necessary measures, through the use of air power, to support the United Nations Protection Forces (UNPROFOR) in the performance of its mandate related to the safe areas. This mandate includes deterring attacks and replying to bombardments on the safe areas. Consistent with these and other resolutions, and in light of the recent events described above, the United Nations requested and NATO initiated air strikes on August 29, 1995. The air strikes were fully coordinated with the simultaneous artillery attacks by the Rapid Reaction Force.

On July 25, 1995, and August 1, 1995, the North Atlantic Council (NAC) approved a number of measures designed to meet further BSA attacks on the remaining safe areas with a "firm, rapid and decisive response." Specifically, the NAC agreed that a "direct attack (e.g., ground, shelling, or aircraft)" against any of the remaining safe areas would initiate air operations as determined by the common judgment of NATO and U.N. military commanders. The NATO air strikes commencing on August 29, 1995, are pursuant to the NAC's decision of August 1, 1995,